

CITY OF AUSTIN URBAN FORESTRY BOARD

Recommendations To The Austin City Council For The

CEMETERY MASTER PLAN

May 20, 2015

The Urban Forestry Board recommends approval of the tree portion only of the Cemetery Master Plan, subject to the following conditions being included:

1. Irrigation – New automated irrigation facilities be installed at the following cemeteries: Austin Memorial Park (AMP), Oakwood, Oakwood Annex, and Evergreen; that employ ground level sprays or rotors that have the capability of watering the entire cemetery at one time to comply with water restriction limitations. The system should be able to water individual zones, when needed, and should have separate controls for watering trees.

NOTE: The Master Plan, as presently written, does not mention irrigation at AMP; and only mentions insufficient minor upgrades at the other cemeteries. These upgrades only provide new hose bibs and risers rather than facilities that are capable of flexible operation.

2. Place the Irrigation proposal for all of the cemeteries in the **PRIORITY 1** category (1 – 2 years).

NOTE: Per direction of the 2013 Parks Board Cemetery Working Group; Sara Hensley's memorandum of September 15, 2011; the Austin Urban Forestry Plan approved in 2014; and the Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 713.011.

3. Design new facilities and roads for each cemetery in a manner, and with the concepts in mind, that large trees will not be removed, critical root zones will not be encroached upon, and increasing impervious cover unnecessarily will be avoided.

NOTE: The proposed 30-space parking lot at AMP near the entrance, and the proposed parking lot at the columbarium, are excessive and not necessary, as is the new maintenance yard that is proposed to be placed in the wooded area in the northeast corner of AMP Cemetery; which would cause the removal of many large trees.

4. The proposal for a north entrance to the AMP Cemetery be removed from the Master Plan. In the alternative, it is recommended that an entrance be placed in the southeast corner of the cemetery just north of the existing office building.

NOTE: An entrance at this location would not only cause the needless removal of many trees and jeopardize the safety of visitors to the cemetery and the Northwest Recreation Center, but it would require the cemetery personnel to move equipment from their storage yard outside the southeast corner of the cemetery more than one mile along city streets (Hancock Dr., Shoal Creek Blvd, and Northland Dr.) around to the north end of the cemetery.

5. Correct the AMP Cemetery maps to include the three acres on the east side.

NOTE: This area is still in a natural state; and it contains a number of heritage trees, a wildlife habitat, and a part of Shoal Creek that need to be included in the plan. Additionally, the 1941 property deed describes and includes this parcel as part of the cemetery.

6. The healthy, beautiful heritage ash tree at the entrance of AMP Cemetery shall not be removed.

NOTE: The visibility at the entrance of AMP Cemetery can be improved by relocating the flagpole and signs.

7. Develop a maintenance plan for all of the public cemeteries that includes applying compost and mulch to the trees, and supplemental watering during periods of insufficient rainfall.

NOTE: This is consistent with the Austin Urban Forestry Plan.

8. Confirm the accuracy of the tree survey with random site visits by City Arborist Office personnel.

NOTE: This is typically done for surveys of this nature, but this has not been done in this case.

9. Place the tree-planting proposals for Oakwood, Oakwood Annex, Evergreen, and AMP cemeteries in the **PRIORITY 2** Category (3 – 5 years).

NOTE: It is important to install new automated irrigation facilities in the four cemeteries prior to planting.

10. Delete the proposal for the additional planting of trees along the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) right-of-way at the west boundary of AMP Cemetery (which is also adjacent to a MOPAC Freeway exit ramp).

NOTE: The Master Plan proposal executed in conjunction with the TxDOT proposal would cause an overcrowded condition that would inhibit proper development of the intended screening. Further, the additional trees proposed by the Master Plan could result in trees being planted on gravesites in that area.

11. Correct Page 402 of the Cemetery Master Plan where it speaks of “care for private trees.”

NOTE: There are no private trees at any cemetery, because any tree planted at a city-owned cemetery becomes a public tree.